

## Safe Harbor Agreements

### What are SHAs?

Agreements that provide regulatory assurances for landowners who voluntarily aid in the recovery of species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

### What is the landowner's role?

Voluntarily agrees to implement management actions that will contribute to the recovery of a listed species for a specified period of time. Works with the Service to develop a management plan and the agreement.

### What are the benefits?

*For the landowner:* Receives regulatory assurances that he or she can alter or modify property enrolled in the SHA and return it to originally agreed upon “baseline” conditions at the end of the agreement (even if this means incidentally “taking” the covered species).

*For the species:* Progress towards recovery.

### Who can participate?

Any non-Federal property owner. Whole parcels or portions of the owner's property may be enrolled in the SHA.

Property owners also can enroll in an existing programmatic or “umbrella” SHA that is designed for a region or an entire State and is administered by a State or local agency or other entity.



## A Texas Cattle Rancher Who “Became a Believer”

“We’re just ‘wildlifing’ it all over the place, and we’re happy to do it,” Bob Long said. Long is enhancing habitat on his 550-acre property to benefit the Houston toad, an endangered species. His Safe Harbor Agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service will expand areas for Houston toads to use for breeding, foraging, and hibernating.

After fencing off ponds, Long has done the same for a major wetland and while providing new livestock watering facilities, he’s using rotational grazing to prevent cattle from trampling toads during the six-month breeding season. Along with keeping trees for shade—particularly important during Texas summers—Long has removed invasive eastern red cedar, planted native bunchgrasses, and conducted prescribed burns to clear low-growing scrub so that the Houston toad can move through corridors that link ponds and woodlands.

Now, with help from the Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, he’s putting in a pipeline to divert water from a creek to the ponds during drought. In addition, Long will plug a drainage ditch and reopen an inlet to restore a 28-acre marsh to benefit Houston toads and other wetland dependent wildlife. “You can say that I’m a landowner willing to try innovative measures,” he said.



Courtesy of Dr. Michael Forsner, Texas State University, San Marcos

“We just found out three years ago that we had Houston toads. As a matter of fact, it was kind of a shock to us . . . the survey showed that we had 25 calling toads at night, the largest number in the county.”

—Bob Long



Courtesy of the Long Family